

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Rep. Pete Stark questioned the Bush Administration's plan to pay the salaries of 2 million Iraqi bureaucrats in post-war Iraq while refusing to extend unemployment benefits to 2.4 million unemployed Americans.

"President Bush's push for war in Iraq has our economy at a dead stop," Stark said. "8.5 million Americans are out of work. The number of Americans who have fully exhausted their unemployment benefits will rise to 3.1 million by May. Yet, instead of taking care of our unemployed workers here at home, the President is busily planning to ensure jobs in post-war Iraq."

"Iraq's citizens have jobs today. If we use diplomacy rather than war to resolve our conflicts with Iraq, there will be no need to rebuild their economy. Unfortunately, that is not the case here in our own country," continued Rep. Stark.

"In the San Francisco Bay Area, the unemployment rate has jumped to an alarming 7%," Stark said. "The late journalist Herb Caen used to call San Francisco 'Baghdad by the Bay.' I say we ought to provide help to the people of our own Baghdad first before paying bureaucrats in Baghdad, Iraq."